

Integrating Appraisal Theory with Psychological Construction Theory

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Progress in the study of emotion requires that the field move toward consensus. To this end, we undertake an attempt to integrate one version of appraisal theory and one version of psychological construction theory, based on the following points of agreement: (a) the to-be-explained phenomena are episodes classified by most people as emotional, (b) these episodes consist of various component, none of which can be identified as the emotion, (c) the components are not predetermined by an affect program, but constructed on the spot based on several sources of information, and (d) research should study relations among components instead of relations among emotions and components. Our attempt also reveals differences and issues that require further empirical testing. Psychological construction has been vague about how the components are connected, whereas appraisal theories have ventured concrete hypotheses about relations between specific appraisal and specific other components. More empirical research is needed, however, to test these and alternative hypotheses, and to contrast the role of appraisal with the role of other types of information processing.